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6 April 1984**

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USSR:**Verification of Chemical Weapons Destruction**

The latest Soviet proposal on verifying the destruction of chemical weapons appears intended to maintain propaganda momentum and avoid any firm commitment. [redacted]

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Last Monday the Soviet delegation to the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva gave the US delegation an advance copy of a proposal on verification procedures for the destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons. The document, which will be distributed at the conference this week, follows up Soviet statements in February accepting the principle of continuous international on-site monitoring of the destruction of chemical weapons. The Soviets have touted that move as a concession because they previously had insisted verification should be based on a quota system. [redacted]

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The proposal calls for verification of the entire destruction process, either by the permanent presence of international representatives or by a combination of systematic international inspections and the use of instruments. It suggests that inspectors could be present during the destruction of binary chemical weapons, supertoxic lethal chemicals, and corresponding munitions or devices. [redacted]

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Comment: The proposal clearly favors the alternative of combining monitoring by instruments with occasional visits, apparently based on a quota system. Its wording appears to exclude international inspection of storage sites except for those that would be specially designated for the storage of weapons slated for imminent destruction. The proposal suggests that inspection of these sites should coincide with visits to verify actual destruction. [redacted]

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Moscow's proposal allows it the maximum maneuverability in the tough negotiations that presumably lie ahead. The Soviets apparently wanted to put their views on record before the US tabled its own treaty calling for more rigorous verification. The move is in keeping with their apparent strategy of professing interest in progress on various arms control issues while hewing to their fundamental positions. [redacted]

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The Soviets have dismissed as propaganda the proposed US ban on chemical weapons. They claim the US is blocking an accord by posing unacceptable verification provisions. [redacted]

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SYRIA:**Power Struggle Continues**

Tension in Damascus remains high despite President Assad's efforts to impose a compromise on the rival factions in his inner circle. [redacted]

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[redacted] the potential for armed conflict between Rifaat and his opponents in the military has risen during the past week. The close proximity and continued high level of alert of opposing forces in Damascus increases the likelihood of accidental clashes. Moreover, the lack of a solution to the struggle for succession could prompt Rifaat to opt for a military solution. [redacted]

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Comment: Relations between Assad and Rifaat probably are being strained by the latter's willingness to flout the President's efforts to resolve the crisis. Rifaat appears increasingly determined to force Assad's hand and extract an unchallenged claim to the succession.

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Assad almost certainly is reluctant to move against Rifaat. An open break might threaten the survival of the Alawite regime. The President may eventually conclude that such a step is necessary, but he continues to exercise strong personal authority and might yet devise an acceptable compromise. [redacted]

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ISRAEL:**Labor Party's Election Prospects**

The Labor Party enters the election campaign more united than at any time since it was ousted from power in 1977. [redacted]

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Party leader Peres was chosen yesterday to be the party's candidate for prime minister. A public opinion poll published this week shows Labor maintaining the strong lead over Likud that it has held since last summer. [redacted]

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Comment: Labor's support among the public is likely to decline as the election approaches. Prime Minister Shamir can take advantage of his powers in the government for maximum political advantage. In addition, Finance Minister Cohen-Orgad will manipulate economic policy to win public support, although probably not as blatantly as his predecessor did in 1981. [redacted]

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The public, moreover, sees Peres as an unscrupulous politician but as an effective administrator. He is neither popular nor respected. [redacted]

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In particular, Peres has failed to build a following among Sephardi voters, who migrated from Islamic countries and now constitute a majority of the electorate. Many Sephardis believe Peres deliberately heightened ethnic tensions during the election campaign in 1981 in order to rally Labor's traditional Ashkenazi voters, who came from Europe and North America. [redacted]

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Peres could still improve Labor's image among Sephardis by giving public assurances that former President Navon, who is a Sephardi, would hold a key policymaking post in a Labor-led government. Labor also could improve its chances if another Sephardi, Israel Kessar, is appointed as expected to the top position in the Histadrut, Israel's large union federation. [redacted]

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JAPAN-US:

Visit by Socialist Leader

Socialist Party Chairman Ishibashi hopes a successful visit to the US will help move his party toward a more balanced foreign policy and thereby strengthen its standing with the voters.

[redacted]

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Ishibashi arrives in Washington tomorrow for 10 days of meetings with Administration officials, members of Congress, businessmen, and academicians. Although the Socialists are the largest opposition party, they have not sent a delegation to the US since 1979. This is the first to be led by the party chairman. [redacted]

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The US Embassy reports that Ishibashi will support the government on bilateral trade issues while emphasizing that the Socialists have basic differences with the ruling Liberal Democrats on defense and foreign policy. [redacted]

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Comment: Since his election last summer, Ishibashi has been unusually successful in directing the Socialists away from ideological squabbles and in developing the realistic policies necessary to challenge the Liberal Democratic Party. His criticism of Soviet SS-20 deployments and the shutdown of the South Korean airliner, as well as his endorsement of Japan's "inseparable relations" with the US, are designed to correct the party's longstanding pro-Soviet bias.

[redacted]

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If the visit goes well, moderate Socialists may encourage further contacts with the US. They also may take a firmer stand against the party's left wing, which is already losing ground. [redacted]

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The extreme Marxists, however, still retain enough influence to have forced Ishibashi on the eve of his departure to seek a meeting in the US with South Korean dissident Kim Dae Jung. He also is having to go slower in developing the party's contacts with Seoul. [redacted]

[redacted]

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GUINEA:**New Regime Taking Hold**

The military leadership has named a government and is trying to win popular support. [redacted]

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Colonel Lansana Conte, who is head of the ruling Military Committee and a former Army chief of staff, has been named President. Colonel Diarra Traore, the second-ranking man on the Committee and the former head of the Air Force, is the Prime Minister. [redacted]

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Traore heads a 31-member cabinet composed largely of middle- and junior-level military officers, most of whom have been drawn from the committee. Several civilians also are included in the cabinet. The US Embassy reports that there seems to be a good balance by tribe and among the various armed services in the makeup of the committee and the cabinet. [redacted]

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The committee has made several public pledges to assure the security of property and to encourage private enterprise. Most of the civil restrictions imposed during the coup have been removed. Nonetheless, the committee has asked the public to be alert to efforts to stage a counter coup, even though there are no signs of opposition and all members of the former regime have been rounded up. [redacted]

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Comment: The new leaders seem to be consolidating their position and moving toward forming a basically moderate government. The fact that virtually all committee members have cabinet positions suggests that the committee's influence and its collegial rule will soon fade. [redacted]

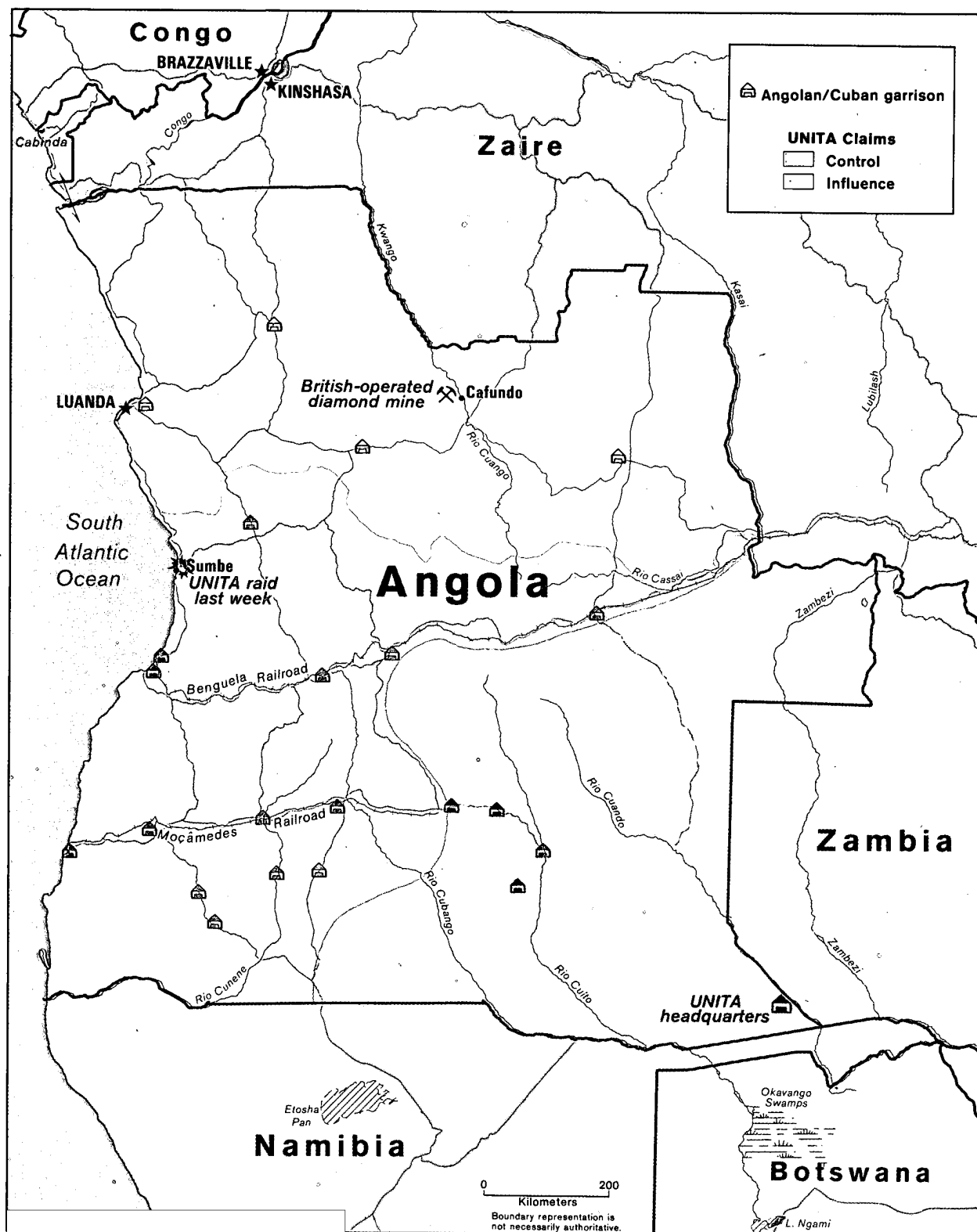
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ANGOLA:

UNITA's Political and Military Plans

UNITA leader Savimbi has again emphasized that conditions leading to a Cuban troop withdrawal can only follow direct negotiations between his organization and the regime in Luanda.

[redacted]

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Savimbi told Western journalists who visited his headquarters in southern Angola last week that UNITA would launch a diplomatic and military offensive aimed at forcing Luanda to enter negotiations. He added that, although he would not try deliberately to jeopardize the current withdrawal of South African forces from Angola, UNITA is not a party to the disengagement process and is not bound to curtail its own operations. [redacted]

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The successful raid on the provincial capital of Sumbe last week was described by the insurgents as the prelude to a military campaign that would be directed increasingly against Angolan cities. UNITA claimed a force of several thousand men temporarily seized the poorly defended city. [redacted]

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[redacted] seven Cuban military personnel were killed and 21 wounded during the battle. [redacted]

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Savimbi also warned that UNITA would attack projects that involve the UK and West Germany if the two governments do not deal with UNITA in the same manner as the US, France, and Portugal. Earlier this week London announced that it would break with past policy and begin dealing directly with UNITA concerning British hostages captured in February at a British-operated diamond mine. [redacted]

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Comment: UNITA apparently is trying to interject its demands for direct talks with Luanda into future negotiations over a withdrawal of Cuban troops. Although the guerrillas hold the military initiative and probably can attack cities throughout the country, UNITA is still unable to defeat Angolan and Cuban forces in the major garrisons and cities. A more active urban campaign nevertheless would reduce the government's freedom to consider a Cuban troop withdrawal.

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ISRAEL-SYRIA: Warning on Attacks

Defense Minister Arens's warning to Syria earlier this week to control Palestinian attacks against Israeli soldiers in the Bekaa Valley underscores Israel's policy of holding Syria responsible. An Israeli military spokesman said that the Israeli artillery strikes last Sunday on two of the PLO bases in Syrian-controlled territory were intended as retaliation for a series of incidents along the cease-fire lines. He also said they were a warning to Syria and the PLO that Israel will not tolerate a war of attrition. [redacted]

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Comment: Tel Aviv issued a similar warning last spring, apparently with some effect, when Palestinian attacks began to increase. If the attacks continue, Tel Aviv is likely to authorize strikes against Syrian positions in Lebanon. The Israelis, however, probably would be selective in their choice of targets. They presumably would not want to divert the Syrians' attention from their domestic political problems. [redacted]

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LIBYA-USSR: Qadhafi May Offer Military Facilities

Libyan leader Qadhafi in the past week has issued two warnings that he intends to offer the USSR military facilities in Libya if the US persists in its threats against Tripoli. In a major speech on 28 March, Qadhafi stressed that such an action by Libya would be defensive and intended to offset US nuclear missiles and NATO bases in southern Europe as well as US military support for Egypt and Sudan. This week Libya delivered an official statement to diplomats from several Mediterranean countries emphasizing that Qadhafi is serious about a military alliance with Moscow. [redacted]

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Comment: Qadhafi may hope that his threats will mobilize Arab, European, and US public opinion against US policy toward Libya. As Qadhafi has grown increasingly suspicious of US intentions, he probably has become more interested in seeking Soviet protection—an idea he previously rejected. Moscow and Tripoli discussed a friendship treaty over a year ago, but that effort foundered. Qadhafi presumably issued his current warnings without Moscow's approval. [redacted]

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USSR-JORDAN: Possible Visits

The US Embassies in Moscow and Amman report that Karen Brutents, deputy chief of the Soviet party Central Committee's International Department, may go to Amman from Beirut and that Jordan's commander in chief has been invited to visit Moscow. A Soviet diplomat recently told US officials that the USSR believes Jordan's ties with the US are strong but that King Hussein is angered by US policy toward Israel and by Washington's failure to provide military equipment. He said Moscow would seriously consider any future Jordanian request for more Soviet weapons. [REDACTED]

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Comment: If Brutents visits Amman, he almost certainly will probe Jordan's willingness to expand bilateral ties and its future arms supply relationship with the USSR, following the US deferral of Amman's request for air defense equipment. [REDACTED]

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USSR-TURKEY: Concern About Possible INF Deployments

[REDACTED] Earlier this week, a

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Soviet party foreign affairs expert stated in a BBC interview that Moscow has reports of a US-Turkish agreement on cruise missile deployment. A TASS report on Wednesday accused the NATO nuclear planning group of seeking other suitable candidates in case the Netherlands and Belgium refuse deployments. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Moscow's concern apparently has been heightened by a combination of Dutch reluctance to decide on deploying the full allotment of 48 cruise missiles, speculation in the Turkish press, and the coincidental meeting in Turkey of NATO's nuclear planning group. The Soviets apparently have not accepted private assurances from Turkish officials, or public statements by the US, that there are no plans for such deployments. [REDACTED]

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FRANCE-NICARAGUA: Reported Offer of Minesweepers

The French press and the US Embassy report that Foreign Minister Cheysson has hinted in a letter to Colombian President Betancur that France might assist in reestablishing freedom of navigation in Nicaraguan waters. Cheysson reportedly said that France would be willing to provide minesweepers if Latin American countries requested them and if at least one other West European country participated. [REDACTED]

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Comment: President Mitterrand almost certainly does not intend to jeopardize his good relations with the US by sending minesweepers to Nicaragua. Cheysson has often made statements that subsequently were refuted by official policy. In any case, his offer contains unrealistic conditions. Cheysson may have wanted only to demonstrate the government's credentials on Third World issues in order to impress its leftist domestic supporters. Paris showed its reluctance to provide aid to the Sandinistas last year when it announced that it would stop selling arms to Managua. [REDACTED]

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CHINA-US: Political Atmospherics

Beijing has gone to unusual lengths to assure the US that President Reagan will be well received in China. Premier Zhao told Secretary of the Treasury Regan recently that China attaches "great importance" to the visit and hopes that it will lead to the sustained development of bilateral relations. Moreover, the US Embassy reports Chinese leaders are suggesting that talks on the maritime treaty and other agreements could be concluded in time for the President to sign them in Beijing. The media have tempered their comments on sensitive issues, including the recent US announcement of the sale to Taiwan of spare parts for military equipment. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Beijing's treatment of the impending visit contrasts with its blunt criticism of US policy on Taiwan before Premier Zhao's visit to Washington in January. The Chinese probably have concluded that they can secure a more stable relationship and greater benefits from the US by adopting a low-key approach to major issues. [REDACTED]

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Press Attack on the Pope

The regime's recent attack on the Pope in the official press indicates that it probably intends to continue a tough approach toward the church, following an unproductive exchange of visits with the Vatican. During the meetings, Prague demanded unsuccessfully that the Vatican lift its two-year-old ban on priests' membership in *Pacem in Terris*, which is the regime-sponsored organization of clergy. The Vatican made no headway in obtaining permission to appoint new Czechoslovak bishops. The US Embassy to the Vatican reports that the last meeting in early March was acrimonious and nearly broke down altogether. [REDACTED]

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Comment: The press attack presumably was designed to reassure hardliners and to restrain the recent limited growth in church attendance. The regime also is concerned that the effectiveness of the church's ban reduces state control over church activities. In addition, Prague's longstanding apprehension about the impact of a Polish Pope on the stability of East European regimes is likely to have been intensified by the recent rise in church-state frictions in Poland. [REDACTED]

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SOMALIA: Changes in Military Commands

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President Siad reassigned key military personnel last Sunday, [REDACTED] He stripped Minister of Defense Samantar of his position as commander of the Army, replacing him with the northern sector commander, General Ganni. Siad appointed his own son-in-law to replace Ganni in the north. There are rumors that more changes will be made. [REDACTED]

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Comment: Samantar's removal as Army commander creates separate command structures for all branches of the armed forces, thereby giving Siad greater direct control. The move will appease influential clan leaders who resent Samantar's clan affiliation and puts Ganni, a member of Siad's own clan, into a key position. Northern leaders have long called for Ganni's removal, but Siad's son-in-law is likely to continue dealing firmly with them. Samantar will still play a key role in military dealings with the US. Ganni, who has criticized US military aid to Somalia, will be more heavily involved in such dealings. [REDACTED]

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In Brief**Middle East**

- **Lebanese** envoys representing Gemayel went to **Damascus** yesterday to prepare for summit meeting with Assad . . . no date has been set . . . talks probably will focus on efforts to implement cease-fire in Beirut. [REDACTED]

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Africa

- Preliminary reports indicate military elements this morning overthrew **Cameroonian** President Biya . . . most likely a power grab by northern officers against southern-dominated regime . . . coup would be another blow to West African stability. [REDACTED]
- US Embassy reports 13 **Liberian** coup plotters scheduled to be executed today . . . Head of State Doe under Western pressure to commute sentences . . . executions could further erode Western investor and donor confidence. [REDACTED]

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Asia

- US Embassy reports clashes subsiding between **Thai** and **Vietnamese** troops along Kampuchean border . . . Thai clearing out pockets of Vietnamese forces still on their territory . . . Bangkok yesterday lodged second protest at UN. [REDACTED]

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Terrorist Watch**Western Europe**

- The leftist 17 November organization, which has claimed credit for the shooting of a US Army sergeant in Athens on Tuesday, states that it will continue to attack US military personnel. The group also claimed responsibility for the killing of a US Navy officer in Athens in November. It reportedly seeks to force the US military out of Greece. [REDACTED]

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Middle East

- Black June has claimed credit for the attack in Jerusalem on Monday that injured 44 people, but [REDACTED] the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine was responsible. The terrorists apparently entered Israel from Lebanon, and the Israelis believe the front could not have launched the operation without Syria's support. Israel is likely to carry out reprisals in Syrian-controlled areas of Lebanon. [REDACTED]

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Latin America

- The attack on a Colombian town on Wednesday by elements of the leftist M-19 group probably reflects the creation of a previously announced western front. It also underscores the group's rejection of the peace agreement recently signed by the government and the country's largest insurgent organization. [REDACTED]

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